



**For immediate release
January 31, 2008**

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ICE SAFETY TIPS

Skating, sledding, or even just walking on Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) frozen ponds and lakes is a great way to get out and enjoy the fresh air during winter. However, DCR recommends that anyone participating in recreational activities on the ice of waters within the Commonwealth use common sense and follow these recommended safety tips from the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA):

1. Never go onto the ice alone. A friend may be able to rescue you or go for help if you fall through the ice.
2. Always keep your pets on a leash. If a pet falls through the ice, do not attempt a rescue. Go for help.
3. Beware of ice covered with snow. Snow can insulate ice and keep it strong, but it also can insulate the ice and keep it from freezing. Snow also can hide cracks as well as weak and open ice.
4. Ice formed over flowing water (including springs under the surface) is generally weaker than ice over still water.
5. Ice seldom freezes or thaws at a uniform rate. It can be 1 foot thick in one spot, and be only 1 inch thick 10 feet away.
6. If a companion falls through the ice and you are unable to reach that person from shore, throw something to them (a rope, tree branch, even jumper cables from the car, etc.). If this doesn't work, go or phone for help before you also become a victim. Get medical assistance for the victim immediately.
7. If you fall in, try not to panic. Turn toward the direction you came from. Place your hands and arms on the unbroken surface, working forward by kicking your feet. Once the ice is solid enough to hold you, and you can pull yourself out, remain lying on the ice (do not stand; lying down spreads your weight across a wider area, lessening the weight on any one spot) and roll away from the hole. Crawl back the way you came, keeping your weight distributed, until you return to solid ice or ground.
8. As the season progresses, plan accordingly and use caution, as the condition of older ice greatly varies and is subject to rapidly changing conditions.

For further tips from MEMA, including information on hypothermia and cold water dangers, please visit the featured section "Stay safe, keep warm in extreme weather" at www.mass.gov.

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The state Division of Fisheries and Wildlife offers additional ice safety tips and also provides an “ice strength table” and guidance in determining “how can I tell if the ice is safe ” at www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/dfwice.htm or go to www.mass.gov/dfwele and search for “ice.”

Five DCR properties offer guided outdoor skating programs in season: Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park, Uxbridge; D.A.R. State Forest, Goshen; Dunn Pond State Park, Gardner; Mt. Tom State Reservation, Holyoke; and Wendell State Forest, Wendell. For contact information for these parks, as well as information about additional winter recreation opportunities in Massachusetts state parks, visit DCR’s website: www.mass.gov/dcr.

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The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), an agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, oversees 450,000 acres of parks and forests, beaches, bike trails, watersheds, and dams, in addition to 278 bridges and miles of roadways. Led by Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr., the agency’s mission is to protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources. To learn more about DCR, our facilities, and our programs, please visit www.mass.gov/dcr. Contact us at mass.parks@state.ma.us.